

Captured at: 2023/07/21 12:00 PM URL: https://arstechnica.com/tech-policy/2019/12/failed-plot-to-steal-domain-name-at-gunpoint-brings-14-year-prison-term/



Dive deeper with generative AI

[Learn more >](#)

ars TECHNICA

SUBSCRIBE



SIGN IN

IT WAS A BAD IDEA —

Failed plot to steal domain name at gunpoint brings 14-year prison term

Man planned armed home invasion instead of paying \$20,000 for domain name.

JON BRODKIN - 12/10/2019, 1:57 PM



Getty Images | Westend61

[Enlarge](#)

180

An Iowa man who plotted to steal an Internet domain name at gunpoint was sentenced to 14 years in federal prison yesterday.

Rossi Lorathio Adams II, a former Iowa State University student who ran a social-media platform featuring "images and videos of young adults engaged in crude behavior, drunkenness, and nudity," repeatedly tried to buy the "doitforstate.com" domain name from a resident of Cedar Rapids. But Adams refused to pay the domain-name owner's \$20,000 asking price—and then things got weird.

ars TECHNICA

Join Ars Technica and

Get Our Best Tech Stories

DELIVERED STRAIGHT TO YOUR INBOX.



Dive deeper

With generative AI, you can innovate faster and drive unprecedented levels of productivity.

[Learn more >](#)



"In June 2017, Adams enlisted his cousin, Sherman Hopkins Jr., to break into the domain owner's home and force him at gunpoint to transfer doitforstate.com to Adams," a Department of Justice [press release](#) said. Hopkins was previously [sentenced to 20 years in prison](#) as part of a plea agreement. More details are in the government's [trial brief](#).

Adams' social-media venture was called "State Snaps" and had more than 1 million followers on Snapchat, Instagram, and Twitter, the DOJ press release said. The phrase "Do It For State!" was commonly used on the State Snaps platform, which explains why Adams wanted the doitforstate.com domain name.

The DOJ described Adams as a "social media influencer." Adams told law enforcement that "he used to own the doitforstate.com domain name" before the victim did, according to the trial brief. The victim registered the domain name on GoDaddy sometime after Adams lost control of it. Adams allegedly began pressuring the victim to sell the domain name to him in June 2015.

Robbery ends in gunshots

In June 2017, Adams drove Hopkins to the domain-name owner's house "and provided Hopkins with a demand note, which contained instructions for transferring the domain to Adams' GoDaddy account," the DOJ said. The heist didn't go as planned, and both the domain-name owner and Hopkins ended up suffering gunshot wounds.

Advertisement



Here's how the DOJ described the incident:

“

When Hopkins entered the victim's home in Cedar Rapids, he was carrying a cellular telephone, a stolen gun, [and] a taser, and he was wearing a hat, pantyhose on his head, and dark sunglasses on his face.

The victim was upstairs and heard Hopkins enter the home. From the top of a staircase, the victim saw Hopkins with the gun on the first floor. Hopkins shouted at the victim, who then ran into an upstairs bedroom and shut the door, leaning up against the door to stop Hopkins from entering.

Hopkins went upstairs, kicked the door open, grabbed the victim by the arm and demanded to know where he kept his computer. When the victim told Hopkins that he kept his computer in his home office, Hopkins forcibly moved the victim to the office. Hopkins ordered the victim to turn on his computer and connect to the Internet. Hopkins pulled out Adams' demand note, which contained a series of directions on how to change an Internet domain name from the domain owner's GoDaddy account to one of Adams' GoDaddy accounts.

Hopkins put the firearm against the victim's head and ordered him to follow the directions on the demand note. Hopkins then pistol whipped the victim several times in the head. Fearing for his life, the victim quickly turned to move the gun away from his head. The victim then managed to gain control of the gun, but during the struggle, he was shot in the leg. The victim shot Hopkins multiple times in the chest. He then contacted law enforcement.

Hopkins also tased the victim in the "left arm, back, and neck," the trial brief said. Even as

Hopkins also lashed the victim in the left arm, back, and neck, the trial brief said. Even as the victim was trying to finish the domain-name transfer on the GoDaddy website, Hopkins "cocked the firearm and stated, 'If this isn't right I'm going to blow your fucking head off!'" the trial brief said. That's when the victim fought back and wrestled the gun away from Hopkins. The domain-name transfer apparently wasn't completed.

Adams was **convicted** in April by a jury in US District Court for the Northern District of Iowa. In addition to his 14-year sentence, Adams was "ordered to make nearly \$9,000 in restitution" and pay for court costs of nearly \$26,000. "Adams had court-appointed counsel during trial, but the court later discovered Adams was earning significant amounts of money while the case was pending," the press release said.

READER COMMENTS

180



JON BRODTKIN

Jon has been a reporter for Ars Technica since 2011 and covers a wide array of telecom and tech policy topics. Jon graduated from Boston University with a degree in journalism and has been a full-time journalist for over 20 years.

Advertisement



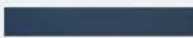
CHANNEL **ars**



SITREP: F-16 replacement search a signal of F-35 fail?



Sitrep: Boeing 707



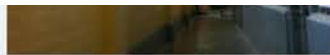
The F-35's next tech upgrade

← PREVIOUS STORY

NEXT STORY →

Related Stories





Accused domain thief faces jail time for "stealing" P2P.com



How I lost my \$50,000 Twitter username



Man held website hostage for \$10,000, failed, redirected it to porn, got busted



Picking up the pieces after the @N Twitter account theft

Sponsored Links by Taboola



6 Things Not to Do When Selecting a Financial Advisor.

SmartAsset

[Learn More](#)



Los Gatos BBQ Joint Named Best In The Country

Noteably



Los Gatos College Named Worst College...

BrainSharper



Los Gatos Restaurant Named Best Burger In USA

TheFashionBall



30 Photos Of Stevie Nicks Before The Fame

UrbanAunty



Nearly 60, Pitt Confesses "She Was..."

HeraldWeekly

[Read More](#)

Today on Ars



DDoS botnets are still feeding on Zyxel devices with vulnerable critical flaw



This LiDAR-equipped, 30-pound robot dog can be yours for \$1,600



IMAX emulates PalmPilot software to power *Oppenheimer's* 70 mm release



New legged robots designed to explore planets as a team



Meet the MCU's new Kree villain, Dar-Benn, in trailer for *The Marvels*



OpenAI, Google will watermark AI-generated content to hinder deepfakes, misinfo



Redditors prank AI-powered news mill with "Glorbo" in *World of Warcraft*



69% of Russian gamers are pirating after Ukraine invasion pushback

STORE
SUBSCRIBE
ABOUT US
RSS FEEDS
VIEW MOBILE SITE

CONTACT US
STAFF
ADVERTISE WITH US
REPRINTS



NEWSLETTER SIGNUP

Join the Ars Orbital Transmission mailing list to get weekly updates delivered to your inbox. [Sign me up →](#)




CONDÉ NAST

CNMN Collection
WIRED Media Group
© 2023 Condé Nast. All rights reserved. Use of and/or registration on any portion of this site constitutes acceptance of our [User Agreement](#) (updated 1/1/20) and [Privacy Policy and Cookie Statement](#) (updated 1/1/20) and [Ars Technica Addendum](#) (effective 8/21/2018). Ars may earn compensation on sales from links on this site. [Read our affiliate link policy.](#)
[Your California Privacy Rights](#) | [Your Privacy Choices](#)
The material on this site may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, cached or otherwise used, except with the prior written permission of Condé Nast.
[Ad Choices](#)

CONDÉ NAST

CNMN Collection
WIRED Media Group
© 2023 Condé Nast. All rights reserved. Use of and/or registration on any portion of this site constitutes acceptance of our [User Agreement](#) (updated 1/1/20) and [Privacy Policy and Cookie Statement](#) (updated 1/1/20) and [Ars Technica Addendum](#) (effective 8/21/2018). Ars may earn compensation on sales from links on this site. [Read our affiliate link policy.](#)

(updated 7/17/20) and Ad's Technical Addendum (effective 6/21/20) for Ad's may earn compensation on sales from links on this site. Read our affiliate link policy.
Your California Privacy Rights |  Your Privacy Choices
The material on this site may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, cached or otherwise used, except with the prior written permission of Condé Nast.
Ad Choices